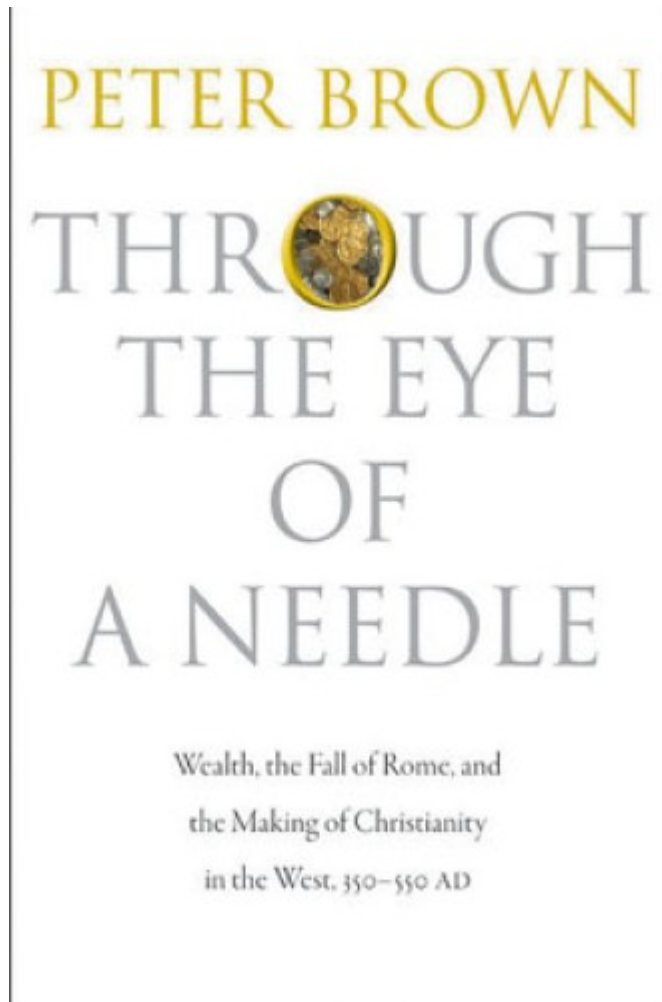


Debra Bendis's Christmas list

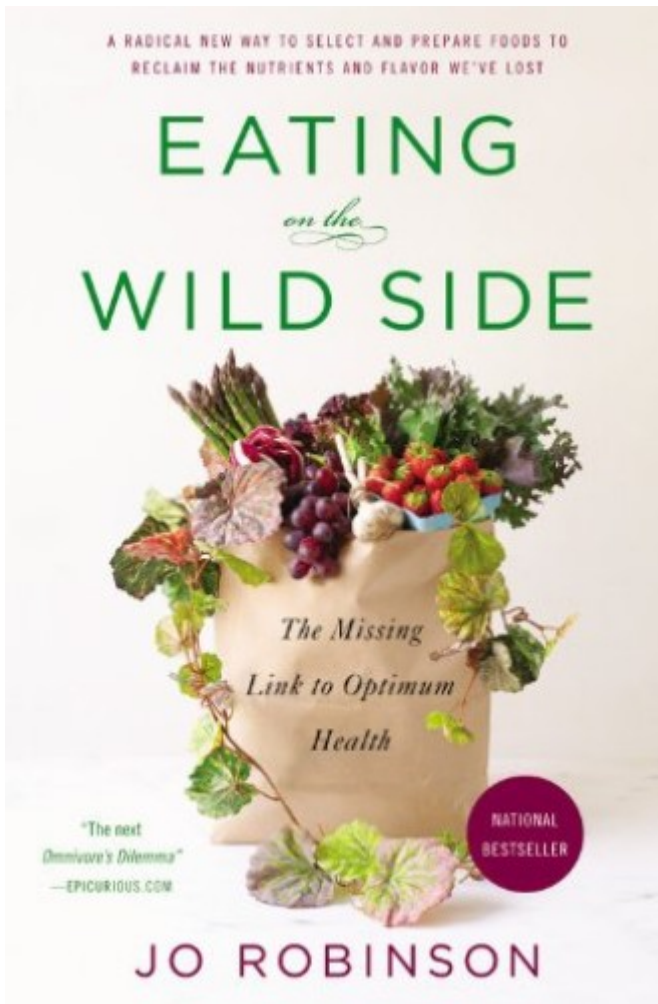
by [Debra Bendis](#) in the [December 10, 2014](#) issue

In Review



Through the Eye of a Needle

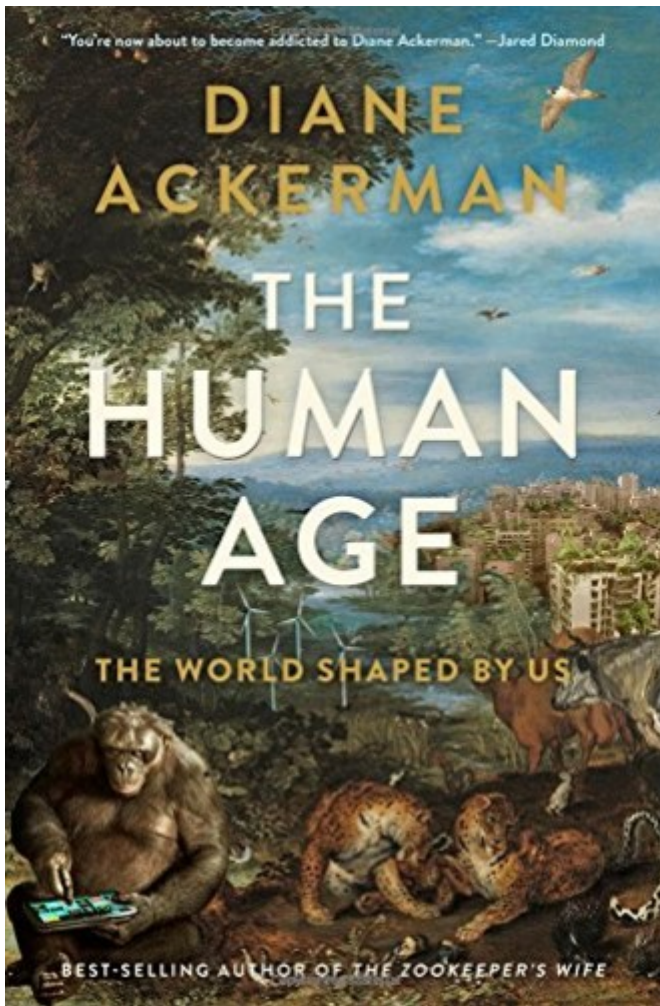
by Peter Brown
Princeton University Press



Eating on the Wild Side

by Jo Robinson

Little, Brown and Company



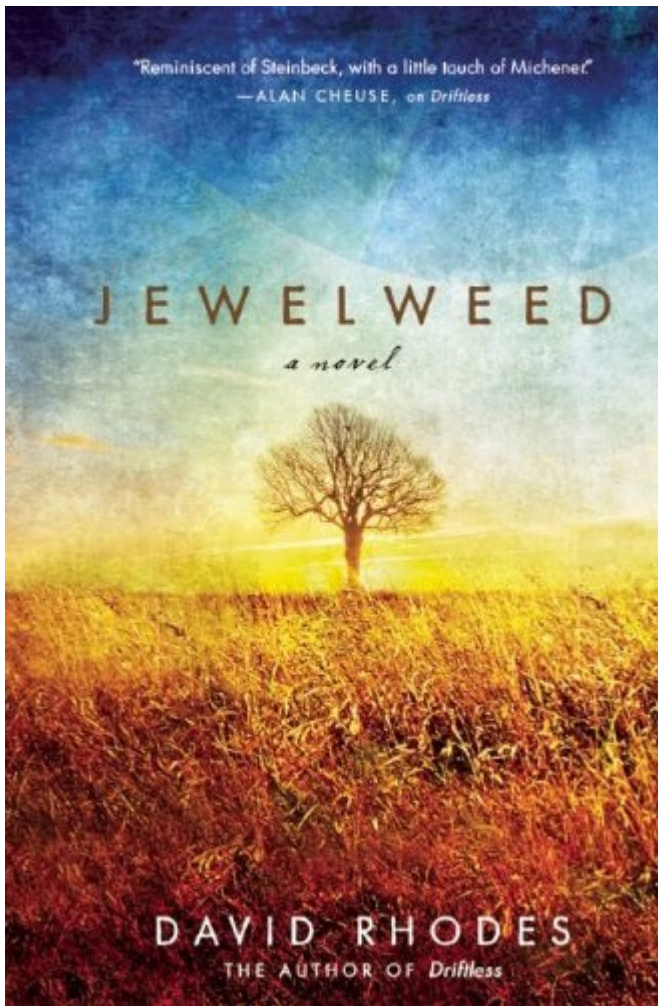
The Human Age

by Diane Ackerman
W. W. Norton & Co.



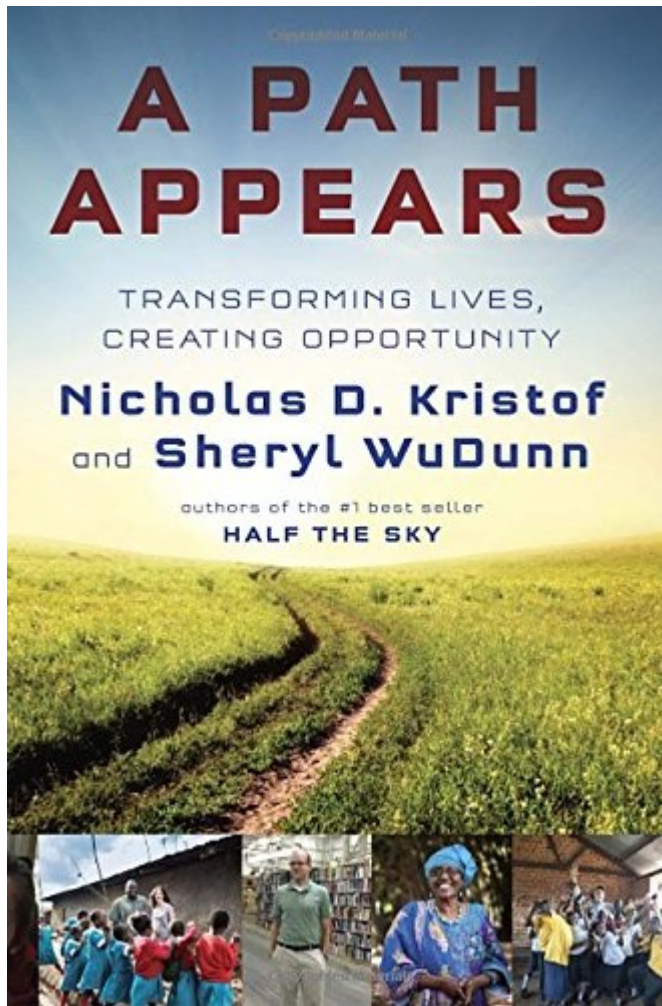
Driftless

David Rhodes
Milkweed



Jewelweed

by David Rhodes
Milkweed



A Path Appears

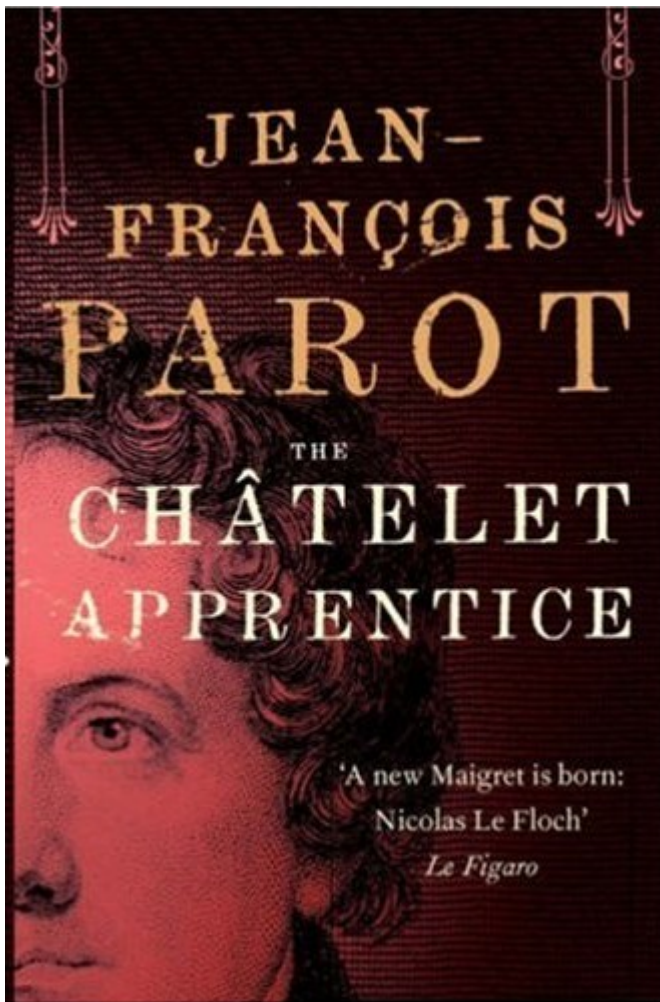
by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn
Knopf



La pyramide de glace

by Jean-François Parot

JC Lattès



The Chatelet Apprentice

by Jean-François Parot
Gallic

To give

Whether read as a companion to formal studies of early Christianity or for pleasure, Peter Brown's *Through the Eye of the Needle* is a valuable and rewarding investment (530 pages plus notes). I read it last year, then took a class on early Christianity. Now I look forward to rereading Brown because he adds context, covering economy, politics, religion, and more—all in one riveting narrative.

The news is not good: we've depleted the earth of many vegetables and fruits by breeding out nutrients and breeding in good looks and/or a longer shelf life. But Jo Robinson doesn't leave us in despair. In *Eating on the Wild Side* she strikes a pleasurable balance between telling the story of the artichoke, blueberry, or carrot,

guiding the reader in what to plant or what to buy (try purple carrots), and how to prepare the produce (a dozen recipes are included).

To receive

I became a devoted fan of Diane Ackerman after reading her account of rowing out among whales in Argentina (*The Moon by Whale Light*). I'm not sure any other writer is as knowledgeable, articulate, and passionate about nature, from bats to whales. Her new book, *The Human Age: The World Shaped by Us*, focuses on humans' relationship to creation.

I loved *Driftless* so much that I was actually disappointed to see that David Rhodes had published a sequel. How could *Jewelweed* ever measure up to *Driftless*? But in reading reviews and talking with a persuasive fan, I've decided to risk the read. Apparently the author has succeeded once again in writing about his neighbors in southwestern Wisconsin with an unflinching eye and deep affection.

Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn are fearless. They've been around the globe, tracking down the starkest, most hopeless topics—sex trafficking, female circumcision, malnutrition, and war crimes. In *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, the *New York Times* columnist and his wife celebrate large and small solutions, many of them ingenious and life-changing.

Jean-François Parot has just published another book in a popular series about Police Commissioner Nicolas Le Floch (*La pyramide de glace*). The charming and loyal Le Floch has the confidence of the king and queen as well as responsibility for murder investigations in 18th-century Paris. Parot, a former diplomat, describes Paris as gritty, overcrowded, and rife with intrigue—perfect for murder mysteries. The plot occasionally slows as meals are described in detail, reminding the reader that the French gastronomic tradition is already taking shape. Although *Pyramide* is available only in French, other books in the series are available in English. Start with *The Châtelet Apprentice*.